



New Federal Support for Rural Regional Planning

A new \$100 million Rural Strategic Investment Program (RSIP) was established as part of the recently enacted Farm Bill. RSIP is designed to provide grants for regional planning and plan implementation through regional boards. The new program will be administered by a new National Board on Rural America comprised of a combination of federal officials and representatives from various stakeholder groups.

\$8 million is set aside for competitive planning grants. Individual grants are capped at a maximum of \$100,000. Planning grants are made to regional boards and may be used to develop, maintain, evaluate and report progress on approved regional plans. Funding can cover planning for:

- Basic infrastructure needs
- Basic services within the region
- Opportunities for economic diversification and innovation
- Current and future human resource capacity
- Access to market-based financing and equity capital
- Development of innovative public-private collaborations

Preference will be given for grants used to address "community capacity building and community sustainability."

A fact sheet describing the RSIP in greater detail is available from the American Planning Association at <http://www.planning.org/legislation/ruralfactsheet.htm>.